

KINGS CANYON ROAD  
(Placerville Road)  
(Lake Tahoe Wagon Road)  
Toiyabe National Forest  
Carson City  
Carson City (Independent Municipality)  
Nevada

HAER No. NV-11

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California 94107

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
KINGS CANYON ROAD (PLACERVILLE ROAD) (LAKE TAHOE WAGON ROAD)

HAER No. NV-11

Location: The southwestern end of this four-mile segment of the Kings Canyon Road intersects Interstate Highway 50 0.75 mile west of the Spooner Summit Rest Area.

USGS Glenbrook, Nevada Quadrangle, 7.5'  
USGS Marlette Lake, Nevada Quadrangle, 7.5'  
USGS Carson City, Nevada Quadrangle, 7.5'  
UTM Coordinates: 249800m East 4332230m North (West end)  
252130m East 4332530m North (East end)

Date of Construction: 1852.

Engineer: Near the eastern flank of Spooner Summit: Butler Ives

Builder: Initial construction: Joseph and Frank Barnard, George Follensbee, A. J. Rollins, and Frank and W. L. Hall.  
Near the eastern flank of Spooner Summit: Butler Ives

Present Owner: United States Department of Agriculture  
United States Forest Service  
Toiyabe National Forest  
1200 Franklin Way  
Sparks, Nevada 89431

Present Use: Road

Significance: The Kings Canyon Road is significant at the state level in three closely-related areas. First, the road was opened in 1852 by the first settlers of Carson City in an attempt to divert emigrant traffic through Eagle Valley and up Kings Canyon. In this regard, the Kings Canyon Road is considered significant for its seminal role in the initial development of Eagle Valley before the founding of Carson City. Secondly, between 1863 and 1875, the road was heavily-used as a major freight and stage wagon toll road between Lake Tahoe and the Carson Valley. Finally, between 1914-1915 and 1928, the Kings Canyon Road was part of the national Lincoln Highway system.

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1200 Franklin Way  
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Date: March 1994

## I. DESCRIPTION

The segment of the Kings Canyon Road described in this record is a four-mile long graded earthen road that is located on Federal land east of Spooner Summit. The original alignment of this road led west from Carson City up Kings Canyon, over Spooner Summit and descended into the Lake Tahoe basin via the town of Glenbrook. During its period of greatest use, the road was considered to be a well-built highway with grades generally limited to 8 percent, with occasional pitches of 15 percent.

On-site examinations of the road and its associated engineering features and subsequent archival research indicates that the historical integrity of the original 1852 and 1863 road grade is substantially intact in the segment under examination, although a one-half mile segment of this road immediately adjacent to Interstate Highway 50 has been obliterated. The entire segment, except for this portion, exhibits a remarkable degree of integrity and the overall appearance and character of the road alignment is preserved. The route currently accommodates high clearance two-wheel drive vehicles. Maintenance has been minimal; only impassable washouts have been repaired.

The overall route of the Kings Canyon Road appears to be fundamentally the same as that depicted on historic maps. Unfortunately, no detailed and topographically-correct maps exist for the initial trails and roads that crossed the Sierra along the route of the "new" Interstate Highway 50. Nonetheless, this segment does not appear to have been widened or replaced; topographical constraints allow for little in the way of modification.

## II. ENGINEERING INFORMATION

As was common on most emigrant roads, the Kings Canyon Road was constructed in several different segments. The eastern-most segment of the road was constructed in 1852 by the first pioneers of Carson City, Joseph and Frank Barnard, George Follensbee, A. J. Rollins, and Frank and W. L. Hall. Engineering and construction of the segment of Kings Canyon Road near the eastern flank of Spooner Summit (the portion in question) was supervised by Butler Ives, renowned surveyor for the General Land Office and the California-Nevada boundary survey in the vicinity of Lake Tahoe.

The four-mile segment of this Kings Canyon road located on Forest Service property retains the essential features which identify it as a historic road. These features include the original cross-section template (comprised of cut-bank, fill slope, road bed, grade, etc.), the original alignment, and the associated engineering features such as retaining walls and culverts.

There are seven rock retaining walls located on this segment of the Kings Canyon Road (TY-3177-2, TY-3177-12, TY-3177-13, TY-3177-16, TY-3177-24, TY-3177-25, and TY-3177-26). These walls are dry-laid masonry structures that have a maximum height of 13 feet and a maximum length of 375 feet. The nineteenth-century aversion to deep cuts and fills probably accounts for the presence of many of these features. Small cuts, accompanied by small fills of granite rubble, allowed these historic roads to follow canyon contours without the need for major excavations. From Spooner's Summit east to Carson City, the Kings Canyon Road descended along the mountainside via extensive sections of heavy rockwork, where the roadway was built up and held in place by dry-wall masonry embankments.

Six culverts, defined as pipe or masonry structures with a clear span of less than 20 feet, were identified along the four-mile segment of the Kings Canyon Road. Two generations of culverts are represented along this segment, one dry-laid masonry and one metal. Both types are considered distinctive engineering features. The two separate rock-retaining walls with masonry culverts (TY-3177-16 and TY-3177-17; TY-3177-24 and TY-3177-25) range up to 120 feet long and 14 feet high. They appear as small drains embedded within dry-laid openings in massive masonry retaining walls and may be the only culverts that date from the original construction in the 1860's. The presence of a rusted metal culvert at their base and the incorporation of cement bags within one of their walls (TY-3177-17) indicate that this feature may have been modified during the Lincoln Highway era between 1914-1928. One metal culvert (TY-3177-6) and one masonry culvert with a concrete facing (TY-3177-19) also likely date from this later period.

Although decades of exposure have subjected the roadbed to natural erosion and deterioration, the overall structural integrity of this roadbed is highly intact. The entire four-mile segment of the Kings Canyon Road on public lands displays a remarkable degree of integrity and the overall appearance and character of the road alignment is well preserved. A single one-half mile segment of the road, where it joins Interstate Highway 50 between Spooner Summit and Spooner Junction, has been obliterated. The Kings Canyon Road, Forest Development Road Number 20-039, is classified as a "Level 2" road, intended for high-clearance vehicles.

### III. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Kings Canyon Road is an integral component of an historic network of roads which were a precursor to the present-day Interstate Highway 50. The Kings Canyon Road was used during three temporal periods which can be defined according to major improvements along the general U.S. 50 corridor through the Lake Tahoe Basin. During the 1850s, this route was used primarily for emigration. The decades 1860 to 1870 marked the most intensive use of this

travelway by freight and stage wagone traneporting people and euppliee between California and Nevada. During the 20th century, this corridor wae a focue of automobile travel. Sequential evente involving each of theee erae in traneportation are discuesed below.

#### Kings Canyon Road- Emigrant Era Overland Travel

Deepite ite obvioue proximity within the geographical center of tran-Sierra emigration efforte, Lake Tahoe wae avoided and bypaesed. Even though paeeee in the basin were at lower elevatione, a traneportation route by Tahoe euffered from the handicap of requiring, in effect, a double croeeing of the mountaine. It e teep eaatern approachee, combined with a "double-eummit bogey" croeeing and uphill-downhill route of the Carson Emigrant Ridge portion of the Johnneon'e Cut-Off route, offered no clear natural advantage and limited the number of emigrante traveling from eaet to weet<sup>1</sup>. Coneequentially, the majority of eaet-to-weet wagon traffic during the early 1850e moved to the north and eouth of the Tahoe Baein, in eearch of more gradual avenuee that could accommodate wagone.

Johnneon'e Cut-Off emigrant route etande ae the one important exception. Thie travelway wae laid out in 1852 and it travereed Tahoe'e eouth ehore and connected Placerville with Eagle Ranch (Careon City) in Careon Valley via Echo Summit and Spooner Summit. Emigrant travel over the eection running between Careon Valley and Lake Tahoe via Spooner Summit, was primarily limited to the period 1852-1854. The northern extremity of Johnneon'e Cut-Off croeeed the Kinge Canyon Road corridor in the vicinity of Spooner Summit and returned to the Kings Canyon alignment ae it approached the Careon Valley. That portion of Johnson'e Cut-Off which croeeed the Careon Range between Friday'e Station (at the foot of Kingebury Grade) and the Careon Valley, wae aleo known ae the Careon Emigrant Ridge Road<sup>2</sup>. It e route eaet of Friday'e Station ie

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1. George Hinkle and Bliee Hinkle, Sierra Nevada Lakes (Reno: University of Nevada Preee, 1987); and Victor Goodwin, "Hietoric Land Uee Patterne in the Lake Tahoe Baein and Effect Upon ite Preeent Milieu," U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Foreet Service, South Lake Tahoe, 1971.

2. Goodwin, op. cit., p. 39; Paul F. Mackey, "Evolution of Land Uee Patterne in the Lake Tahoe Baein with Emphaeie on the Spatial Patterns Resulting from Early Traneportation and Mining Developmente," in Geological Studies in the Lake Tahoe Area of California and Nevada, Annual Field Trip Guidebook of the Geological Society of Sacramento, ed. J.R. Evane (n.p., n.d.), 73; E.B. Scott, The Saga of Lake Tahoe, vol. 1 (Cryetal Bay: Sierra-Tahoe Publishing Company, 1957), 361.

described as follows<sup>3</sup>:

In order to avoid the marshes, covee, and headlands along Lake Tahoe's east shore, the road angled northeast in a dipey-doodle fashion across the high benches and ridges of the Carson Range to Spooner's Summit, then known as Eagle Ranch Pass. From Eagle Ranch Pass, Johnson's trail descended to Eagle Ranch (Carson City) via Clear Creek.

Carson City was heralded as a gateway between the Sierra Nevada and the Great Basin desert, commanding trade and travel for both regions<sup>4</sup>. The opening of the Johnson's Cut-Off, and what was later to become the Kings Canyon Road, is tied to the initial settlement of Carson Valley. In November 1851, Joseph and Frank Barnard, George Follensbee, A. J. Rollins, and Frank and W. L. Hall established Eagle Ranch, the first settlement to occupy the greater part of the present townsite of Carson City<sup>5</sup>. These men opened a trading-post, cultivated a garden, harvested hay, and enjoyed a profitable emigrant business until 1854<sup>6</sup>. The partners located on a large tract of good land, extending up into Kings Canyon. They constructed a cabin at the mouth of the canyon, which was prominently visible to emigrants passing along the Carson River. Thompson and West provide additional details regarding their early enterprise:

They located along what had become a favorite route for emigrant trains. In 1852, the Halls and partners ran the Eagle Station and became packers of goods from California, trading with overland emigrants, and helped to grade a road up Kings Canyon, with the goal of inducing the overland travel to pass that way. During that year a number of emigrants went that way, but it was a bad road, and was soon abandoned, except by pack-trains.

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3. Goodwin, op. cit., p. 361.

4. R. R. Olmstead, ed., Scenes of Wonder and Curiosity from Hutchings California Magazine 1856-1861 (Berkeley: Howell-North, 1962), 314.

5. Alfred Doten, "Carson, The Capital City of Nevada," The Nevada Magazine 1, no. 2 (September 1899), 17-37.

6. Thompson and West, History of Nevada (1881; reprint, Berkeley, Howell-North Books, 1958), 531.

7. Ibid., p. 34.

In 1852, Dr. B. L. King, another pioneer settler of Eagle Valley whose name was bestowed upon the canyon, also settled at the mouth of Kings Canyon.

James E. Wood was the first to travel the new road over Kings Canyon<sup>10</sup>. "Bartlett's Guide to California" describes the route from Eagle Ranch in Carson Valley, through Kings Canyon and into the Sierra Nevada mountains according to actual measurement and survey<sup>11</sup>:

Commencing at the intersection of Johnson's Cut-Off with the old immigrant road, at the foot of Eagle Valley, in a S.W. direction to Eagle Ranch (3 3/4 miles);

Plenty of grass and water. Passing up an arm of the valley (2 3/4); (To the summit of the ridge (2 1/2));

Descending to good grass and small springs (1/2 mile);

Continue descending, but passing over sandy hills on the south of the road, to good grass and water (2 miles);

A gradual ascent, the latter portion in a ravine, to the top of the ridge (2 3/4 miles);

Road rough, to a large meadow of grass and water (1 mile) [present-day Spooner Lake];

Over ridges and ravines often in sight of Bigler of Truckee Lake, with plenty of water and small patches of grass, to the summit of a ridge (3/4 mile) [Carson Emigrant ridge road section of Johnson's Cut-Off]; Descent sandy and steep to the foot (1 3/4 mile);

Road good to intersection of trail with Mormon Station (1 3/4 miles) [western base of Kingsbury Grade].

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8. Doten, op. cit., p. 21.

9. Sam P. Davis, The History of Nevada, 2 vols. (n.d.; Reprint, Reno: Elms Publishing, 1913), 227.

10. K Subject Index. Nevada Historical Society Archives, Reno.

11. "Bartlett's Guide to California," Placerville Herald, 13 August 1853.

The potential of the Johnson's Cut-Off as a viable trans-Sierra route was recognized in the post-emigrant era. Local movements by Mother Lode mining camps to establish themselves as major trans-Sierra wagon road terminale, combined with passage of the Wagon Road Act by the California Legislature in 1855, as well as the timely transcontinental railroad survey and federal road construction projects during the mid and late 1850s, triggered a series of road surveys between the Sacramento Valley and Carson Valley. The first of these surveys, the Seneca Marlette-Sherman Day Survey of 1855, incorporated portions of the old Johnson's Cut-Off route. From the west, it covered the Carson Pass-Luther Pass-Johnson (Echo) Pass routes into the Lake Tahoe Basin, and the West Carson Canyon, Daggett Pass-Eagle Ranch Pass (Spooner Summit) approaches from the east. The survey determined that the segment of the Johnson's Cut-Off, between Stateline and Eagle Valley, by way of Spooner Summit and Clear Creek, be abandoned in favor of the route over Luther Pass and the West Carson River Canyon. A complementary survey by George Goddard in 1855 supported the Marlette-Day proposal, but recommended that additional road surveys along Tahoe's eastern rim be conducted.

#### **Kings Canyon Road - Comstock Era Stage and Freight Wagon Toll Road**

Incipient travelways within the U.S. 50 corridor, such as the Johnson's Cut-Off, would have eventually deteriorated and become impassible, had it not been for the discovery of the fabulous Comstock Lode in June of 1859 and the ensuing reverse migration eastward to the mines of Nevada. Accordingly, the U.S. 50 corridor was established as a route from California to Nevada, rather than as an immigrant route into the golden state<sup>12</sup>.

The opening of the Comstock mining boom prompted a sudden surge of heavy wagon and freight traffic through the Tahoe Basin and quicker routes were sought across the Tahoe Sierra. From the gold fields of California through Placerville, the Bonanza Road system (also known as the Placerville-Lake Tahoe Wagon Road, the Lincoln Highway, and ultimately Interstate Highway 50) traversed portions of the old Johnson's Cut-Off on the way to the Carson Valley (Genoa and Carson City). From 1858 to 1868, the Bonanza Road was the principal means of ingress and egress to and from the Comstock, being the busiest and most profitable turnpike in the American West<sup>13</sup>.

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12. Stephen D. Mikesell, "Historical Overview of Old U.S. 50, 1895-1940, 3-EDJ-50, P.M. 39.7/67.8, 03-910076" (CalTrans, Sacramento, 1990), 4-5.

13. Goodwin, op. cit., p. 37.



The three major arterials within the Bonanza system of toll roads exited the Tahoe Basin over Luther Pass, Daggett Pass and Spooner Summit. Luther Pass enjoyed status as the favored route through the Tahoe basin between 1858 and 1860. Construction of the Kingsbury-McDonald Grade over Daggett Pass in 1860-1861, directed traffic from the southern to the southeastern Tahoe Basin. With the completion of a new road over Spooner Summit in November of 1863, the flow of travel was channeled further to the northeast. This route traveled further north up Lake Tahoe's eastern shorelines between Friday's Station (Stateline) and Spooner's Station (Spooner Summit) before crossing over the Carson Range, dropping to Carson City by way of Kings Canyon. The route over Spooner Summit (often referred to as the Lake Bigler Toll Road) was the last and final link in the system. This final arterial, which ultimately joined Placerville with the Carson Valley via Spooner Summit, later came to be known as the Lake Tahoe Wagon Road. More particularly, that section of the Lake Tahoe Wagon Road east of Spooner Summit and running along Kings Canyon to Carson City was (and is now) referenced as the Kings Canyon Road.

The Spooner Summit segment of the Lake Tahoe Wagon Road was constructed and initially operated as a territorial licensed franchise, being financed by H. F. Rsa, Alfred Helm, and Thomas G. Hayden<sup>14</sup>. The Laws of Nevada stipulated the provisions of the franchise<sup>15</sup>.

Alfred Helm, his associates and assigns, shall have the right and are hereby authorized to build, construct, and keep, a toll road, the eastern terminus of which shall be at or near the Western end of King Street, in the Town of Carson City, in the Territory of Nevada, and shall continue up and through what is known as King's Canyon, to the summit of the eastern range of the Sierra Nevada Mountains; thence along the western slope of said mountains, by the eastern and southern shore of said lake, until said road intersects the boundary line of the State of California, or a road known as the Kingsbury Road; and shall have the exclusive right of way for said road between the points herein named as the termini of said road, which is hereby granted and ceded to the above named parties for the term of twenty years; provided, that the said parties shall

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14. Thompson and West, op. cit., p. 542.

15. Nevada Legislatures, Second Session, "An Act to Authorize Alfred Helm, His Associates and Assigns, to Construct a Toll Road" (Carson City, 1862), 20-22.

commence the construction of the road within ninety days from the passage of this Act, and shall make it open for public travel within one year from said date, otherwise the right to construct and keep the same shall be forfeited, and this Act become null and void.

West of Spooner Summit, the Lake Tahoe Wagon Road incorporated portions of the old Walton Toll Road, which wound down the south side of Glenbrook Canyon (the location of present Interstate Highway 50). This franchise was originally operated by Rufus Walton between 1861 and 1863.

From Spooner Summit eastward, the Kings Canyon section of the Lake Tahoe Wagon Road left Walton's Clear Creek Road and was constructed to the northeast. The route and grades of the Lake Tahoe Wagon Road up Kings Canyon is described by Galloway<sup>16</sup>.

The Kings Canyon or Lake Bigler Toll Road [Lake Tahoe Wagon Road]...leads directly west from Carson City up Kings Canyon to a divide and thence along the mountain side to Spooner Summit, from which it descends to the shore of Lake Tahoe at Glenbrook. From that point it follows the shore of the lake southward around Cave Rock to a junction with the Kingsbury Road at Small's [Friday's Station]. From Carson to Small's the distance is about 25 miles. The Kings Canyon Road was a well-built highway with grades generally limited to 8%, although there was some pitching of 15%, which is much less than grades used in roads in this region.

Butler Ives supervised the engineering and construction of the new Kings Canyon Road<sup>17</sup>. Construction was labor-intensive and was initiated with black powder, scrapers, dump-wagons, and chain drags, along with the men and teams needed to operate them<sup>18</sup>. The Spooner Summit-Kings Canyon section of the Lake Tahoe Wagon Road was a well-engineered and constructed route with the easiest grades of any of the Bonanza Road links and the lowest passes across the Carson Range<sup>19</sup>. As with all first-class toll roads, this route was kept

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16. John Debo Galloway, Early Engineering Works Contributory to the Comstock, University of Nevada Bulletin 41, no. 5 (Reno: University of Nevada, 1947), 33-34.

17. Ibid.; Goodwin, op. cit., p. 78; Hinkle and Hinkle, op. cit., 272.

18. Goodwin, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

19. Gold Hill News 11 November 1863; Goodwin, op. cit., 78; Thompson and West, op. cit., p. 542.

sprinkled as a protection against the wear of its surface and for the greater comfort of those passing over it during the dry season<sup>20</sup>. Teamsters placed a premium on an even grade and smooth road surface in order to deliver the maximum load with the minimum stress on livestock<sup>21</sup>. Successful private toll operators maintained superior roadways by collecting substantial toll revenues that accompanied great traffic. Toll rates over the Kings Canyon Road were fixed by the County Commissioners on the 9th of July, 1863, and were as follows<sup>22</sup>:

Wagon with two animals .....	\$2.00
Each additional animal .....	\$0.25
Empty wagons, half rate	
Buggy and two horses .....	\$1.50
Buggy and one horse .....	\$1.00
Horseman .....	\$0.50
Pack animal .....	\$0.25
Loose animals, (each) .....	\$0.125

By 1864, the Pioneer Stage Lines and stages and the heavy freight traffic, which had been moving over the Kingsbury Grade and Daggett Pass, relocated to the new Kings Canyon Road<sup>23</sup>. The Benton Stage Line between Glenbrook and Carson City traveled both the Kings Canyon Road and the Clear Creek Road (located south of Kings Canyon Road along the old Rufus Walton Grade)<sup>24</sup>. At Spooner's Summit, the east-west traffic split, with most of the traffic travelling over the Kings Canyon Road<sup>25</sup>. Fewer numbers moved over the Clear Creek portion of Rufus Walton's old toll road up Clear Creek.

Several way-stations were strategically placed along the route of the Spooner Summit route of the Lake Tahoe Wagon Road to provide the services required by travelers. Friday's Station, located at the base of the Kingsbury Grade, was also the southernmost station on this segment. Two hostleries served travelers in Glenbrook, the Glen Brook House and the Lake Shore House. Michael Spooner's hotel, bar, and stables provided services in Spooner's

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20. Thompson and West, op. cit., p. 543.

21. Mikesell, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

22. Thompson and West, op. cit., p. 543.

23. Goodwin, op. cit., p. 80; Scott, op. cit., p. 236.

24. Goodwin, op. cit., p. 81; Scott, op. cit., pp. 206-207, 269.

25. Goodwin, op. cit., p. 81.

Meadow at Spooner Summit (near the present junction of U.S. Interstate Highway 50 and Nevada State Highway 28). A large frame hotel, complete with barn and outbuilding, known as Swift's Station, was located on the King's Canyon Road about two miles east of Spooner's Summit. During the 1860s and 1870s Aea Hawley (builder of the Hawley Grade of the Bonanza Road chain) operated Swift's Station<sup>26</sup>. With the completion of the Central Pacific Railroad, much of the freight and passenger traffic to and from the Comstock was diverted away from the Tahoe Basin and north to Donner Pass. However, the King's Canyon segment of the Lake Tahoe Wagon Road continued to be used as part of the system of roads which supported the lumbering communities and later the resorts along Tahoe's east shore. Traffic in timber products over Spooner Summit was drastically reduced, however, with the completion of the V-flume between the summit and Carson City in 1868-1870 and with the construction of the narrow gauge logging railroad between the mills at Glenbrook and the head of the Clear Creek V-flume at Spooner Summit in 1875. As such, the hey-day of toll travel over Spooner Summit, and along the King's Canyon Road in particular, was rather short-lived, spanning a period between 1863 and 1875. When traffic and toll revenues declined in the 1870s and 1880s, road operators allowed their road sections to fall into disrepair and jurisdiction often reverted to the respective counties.

#### Kings Canyon Road - Automobile Tourism and the Lincoln Highway Era

In 1914-1915, portions of the Lake Tahoe Wagon Road (which included much of the route of the present-day U.S. 50) were designated as links in the Lincoln Highway, the nation's pioneer transcontinental auto road which was incorporated into U.S. Interstate Highway 50 in 1925<sup>27</sup>. The King's Canyon Road was designated as a temporary segment of the Lincoln Highway between 1914-1915 and 1928<sup>28</sup>.

The Lincoln Highway concept was conceived by the Lincoln Highway Association, in concert with the fledgling auto industry and its support industries, in the fall of 1913. Highway plans entailed the development of a continuous, connecting, improved road from the Atlantic to the Pacific which joined New

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26. Ibid., p. 63.

27. Ibid., pp. 71-72.

28. State of Nevada, Nevada Department of Transportation, Biennial Reports, compiled by Hal E. Goss (Carson City, 1914-1915 and 1928).

York and San Francisco, a distance of 3331 miles<sup>29</sup>. The summer of 1915 saw an increase in transcontinental touring of between 300 and 600 percent, with 25,000 automobile parties touring to California<sup>30</sup>. Three factors account for the western touring boom by automobile. The war in Europe discouraged travel overseas, the Panama-Pacific Exposition and the San Diego Exposition in California provided a reason for the western trip<sup>31</sup>, and the improvement of the Lincoln Highway afforded the means to get there<sup>31</sup>.

The first automobiles traveled to the Lake Tahoe Basin in the mid-1910s. At the onset of this early automobile era, the Clear Creek Toll Road (east of Spooner Summit and south of the Kings Canyon Road) had fallen into disuse, and was practically abandoned in favor of the Kings Canyon Road<sup>32</sup>.

Designation of the Kings Canyon Road as a section of the Lincoln Highway in 1914-1915 encouraged motorists into the Tahoe Basin. During this period, the Kings Canyon section of the Lincoln Highway was renamed the Oettermann Grade, in honor of one prominent official of the Lincoln Highway Association who was particularly impressed with the route's spectacular scenic beauty<sup>33</sup>. In 1928, the paved Carson City-to-Spooner Summit section of U.S. Interstate Highway 50 was built over the Clear Creek Road by the Nevada State Highway Department<sup>34</sup>. In turn, the route to the basin from California and Nevada were paved. Ultimate transformation of the old Lincoln Highway into the improved U.S. Interstate Highway 50 further enhanced general accessibility to automobile tourism, especially along Tahoe's south shore.

No funds were initially allotted to a transcontinental highway, and Lincoln Highway status did not directly result in supporting funds for new road construction or reconstruction. However, the notoriety achieved from such a designation did motivate both state and local government and private groups to improve road segments within the Lincoln Highway system.

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29. Lincoln Highway Association, A Brief for the Lincoln Highway in Utah and Nevada: Addressed to Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. (Detroit: National Headquarters, the Lincoln Highway Association, 1916), 32; Nevada Department of Transportation, op. cit..

30. Lincoln Highway Association, op. cit., 32.

31. Ibid..

32. Goodwin, op. cit., p. 82.

33. Ibid..

34. Galloway, op. cit., p. 34; Goodwin, op. cit., p. 82.

The auspicious goal to complete a transcontinental road in hard surfaced material and marked for the guidance of the tourist for its entire length, required a long-term effort<sup>35</sup>. Citizens of Carson City volunteered to do their part to promote the Kings Canyon segment of the Lincoln Highway. Activities of the "Good Roads Club" are chronicled in the Carson City News<sup>36</sup>:

The Carson Good Roads Association is doing a work, the importance of which cannot be overestimated...that roadwood posts 6 x 6 x 10 feet long, had already been purchased and would soon be placed at intervals of a mile beginning at Carson over the Kings Canyon grade to Glenbrook. These posts will bear the official Lincoln Highway sign and, in addition, the eastern exposure will show distance from Carson to Glenbrook and San Francisco, while the western exposures will give distances to Carson City. Large board signs with full traveling direction will be placed at the junction of Carson and King Streets and the intersection of the Clear Creek and Kingsbury Roads with the Lincoln Highway. Independent direction signs will also be placed at every cross-roads in Ormsby county. In addition to this, and of even greater importance, will be the establishment of a complete system of caution and danger signs. These are particularly needed on the Kings Canyon Road and it is the intention of the Association to be especially thorough on that stretch of the Lincoln Highway. This is costing considerable money and there are other plans under consideration that, if carried out, will mean much to Carson City and vicinity. The only source of revenue the association has is its small monthly membership dues of 50 cents. There is now enrolled an even 100 names and it is hoped and believed there are several hundred more men in Carson who are willing and anxious to help this good work along.

#### IV. PROPOSED ALTERATIONS

The Carson Ranger District of the Toiyabe National Forest has proposed in the Spooner Summit Timber Sale to harvest timber from a 3415 acre section of land around Spooner Summit. The purpose of the sale is to remove insect and

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35. The Lincoln Highway Association, op. cit., p. 39.

36. Carson City News, 17 June 1914.

drought-damaged commercial timber, reduce the risk of hazardous trees in recreation areas and travelways, and to remove a fire risk from the immediate vicinity.

Selective thinning of timber stands will encompass timber of varying sizes and include multiple species. Harvested timber will generally be transported from felling locations by helicopter to designated helicopter landing sites. Within the project area, the Kings Canyon Road will be used for ground transport of timber from the helicopter landings.

A number of alterations are planned on this segment of the Kings Canyon Road. At the intersection of Kings Canyon Road and Highway 50, the project will reconstruct and realign the more modern approach to the Kings Canyon Road so it will accommodate log trucks entering Interstate Highway 50. Two roads are planned to connect the Kings Canyon Road to helicopter landing areas (helipads). Helipad #11 will adjoin the Kings Canyon Road via an existing dirt road which accesses a dispersed camping site (Milepost 0.55). The existing spur road and camping site appear to have been heavily used in recent years. There are no current plans to close the road after the timber harvest. Informal camping will continue to be allowed at the close of the sale. Use of the proposed Helipad #12 involves the construction of a new spur road (Milepost 1.92). After timber harvest, the road will be removed and the area will be restored to its pre-undertaking contours. Two turnouts are proposed along the Kings Canyon Road. Turnouts will be a minimum of eight feet wide and 50 feet long, with 25-foot tapers at each end. The turnouts are located at Milepost 1.00 and 1.43. The second turnout will require the removal of a 22-inch pine tree and a stump. The addition of two new turnouts will require widening portions of the Kings Canyon Road and adding new physical and visual elements that were not part of the original road.

Ongoing erosion along the entire length of the Kings Canyon Road segment will be arrested and stabilized by pulling in the existing outside road berm to a level grade and then slightly insloping the grade to prevent further erosion within the roadbed. The road surface will be contoured with "driveable rolling dips". A maximum of fifteen rolling dips will be excavated to a depth of 1.5 feet. In addition, two culverts will be removed along the segment and replaced with rolling dips to prevent additional erosion on the road surface. Modifications will not involve any cuts into the existing bank. As a safety precaution, brush will be cleared within a ten-foot corridor on each side of Kings Canyon Road at Milepost 1.14 for a distance of 50 feet.

## V. SOURCES

### Plans and Maps

1955 U.S.G.S. Topographic Map of the Marlette Lake, Nevada Quad. Photo-revised 1982. 1955 U.S.G.S. Topographic Map of the Glenbrook, Nevada Quad. Photorevised 1982.

1968 U.S.G.S. Topographic Map of the Carson City, Nevada Quad. Photo-revised 1982.

1968 U.S.G.S. Topographic Map of the Genoe, Nevada Quad. Photorevised 1982.

1993 Plan for Construction, Kings Canyon Road, Carson Ranger District, Toiyabe National Forest.

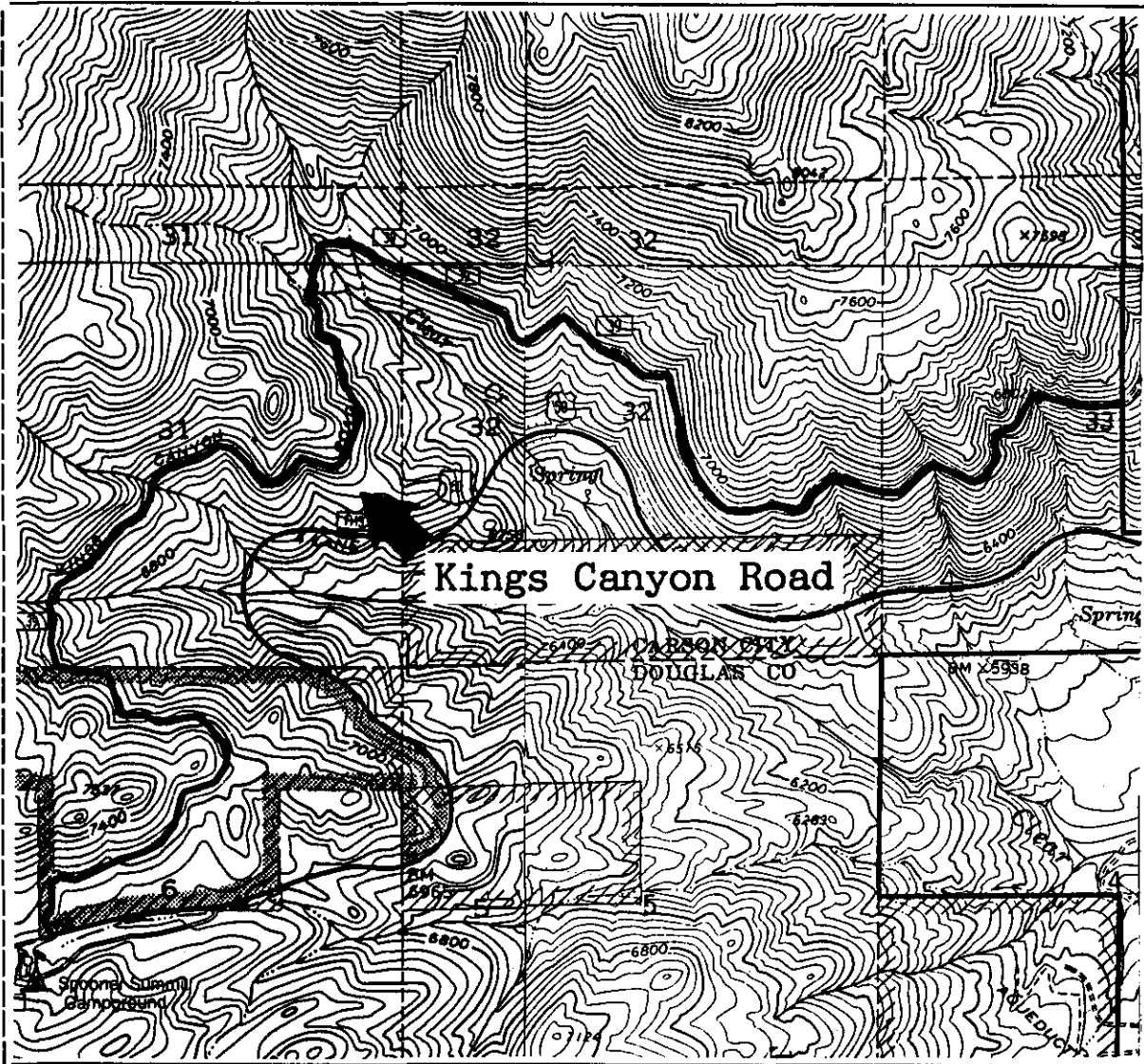
## VI. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation has been prepared by the Toiyabe National Forest as part of a Memorandum of Agreement with the Nevada Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. This documentation was prepared prior to construction on the Kings Canyon Road.

The original determination of eligibility for the Kings Canyon Road was written by Susan Lindstrom as part of a subcontract with Biosystems Analysis, Inc.. The documentation provided in this HAER record is based on a previous investigation conducted by Susan Lindstrom. The photographer for this project was David Lanner of the Carson Ranger District, Toiyabe National Forest.



FIGURE 1: TOPOGRAPHIC MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THE KINGS CANYON ROAD SEGMENT



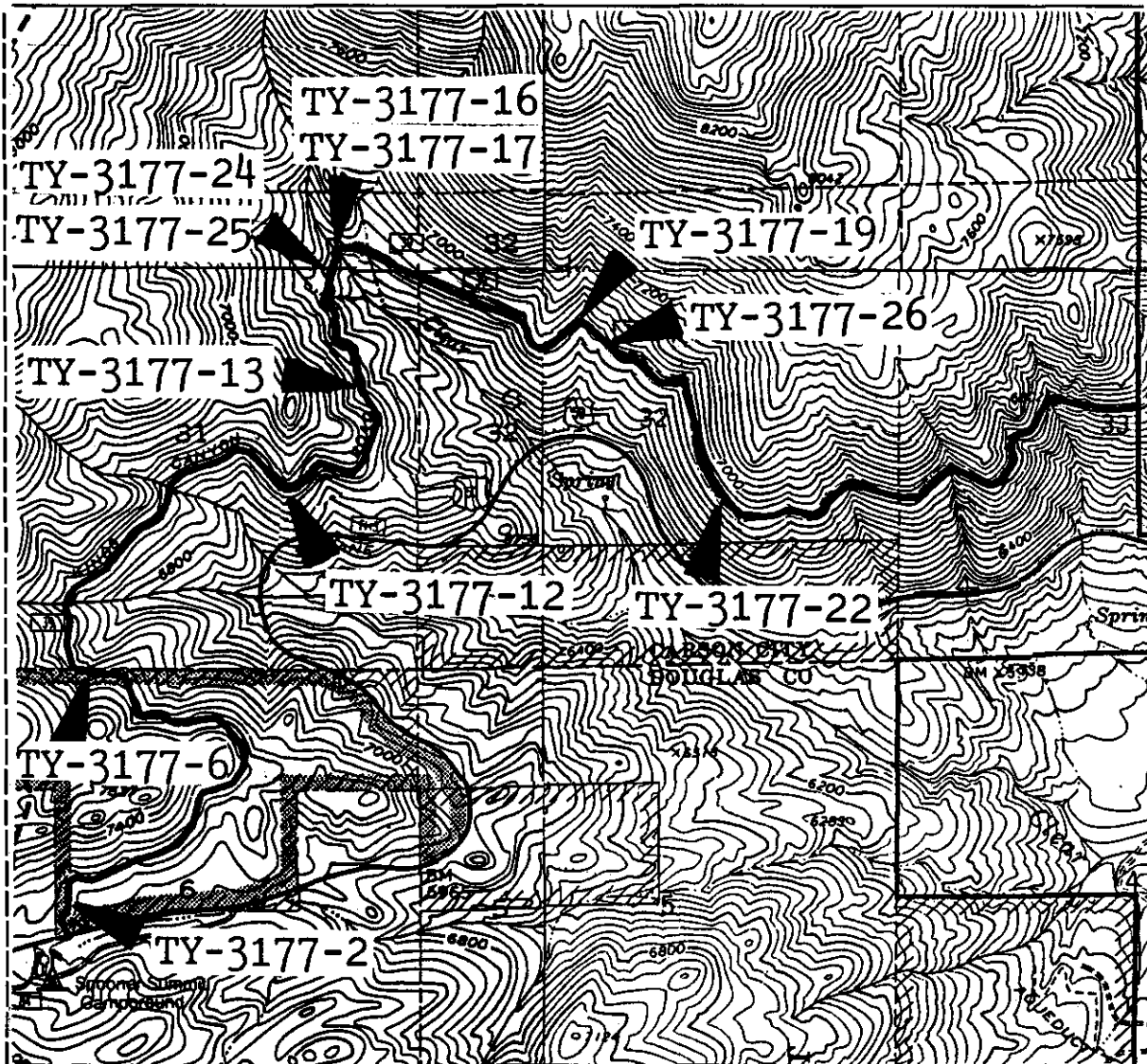
U.S.G.S. Quad: Glenbrook, Nev. 7.5' 1955  
 Marlette Lake, Nev. 7.5' 1955  
 Carson City, Nev. 7.5'  
 Genoa, Nev. 7.5'  
 Photorevised 1982

Scale: 1" = 2000'  
 1 cm = 236 m

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Solid Line Indicates the Location of the Kings Canyon Road

FIGURE 2: TOPOGRAPHIC MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF FEATURES ON THE KINGS  
 CANYON ROAD SEGMENT



U.S.G.S. Quad: Glenbrook, Nev. 7.5' 1955  
 Marlette Lake, Nev. 7.5' 1955  
 Carson City, Nev. 7.5'  
 Genoa, Nev. 7.5'  
 Photorevised 1982

Scale: 1" = 2000'  
 1 cm = 236 m

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Solid Line Indicates the Location of the Kings Canyon Road

KINGS CANYON ROAD  
 (Placerville Road) (Lake Tahoe  
 Wagon Road)  
 HAER NO. NV-11  
 Page 18

FIGURE 3: ORIGINAL ROAD PLANS FOR THE PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO THE KINGS  
 CANYON ROAD (SUBMITTED BY CARSON RANGER DISTRICT AUGUST 1993)

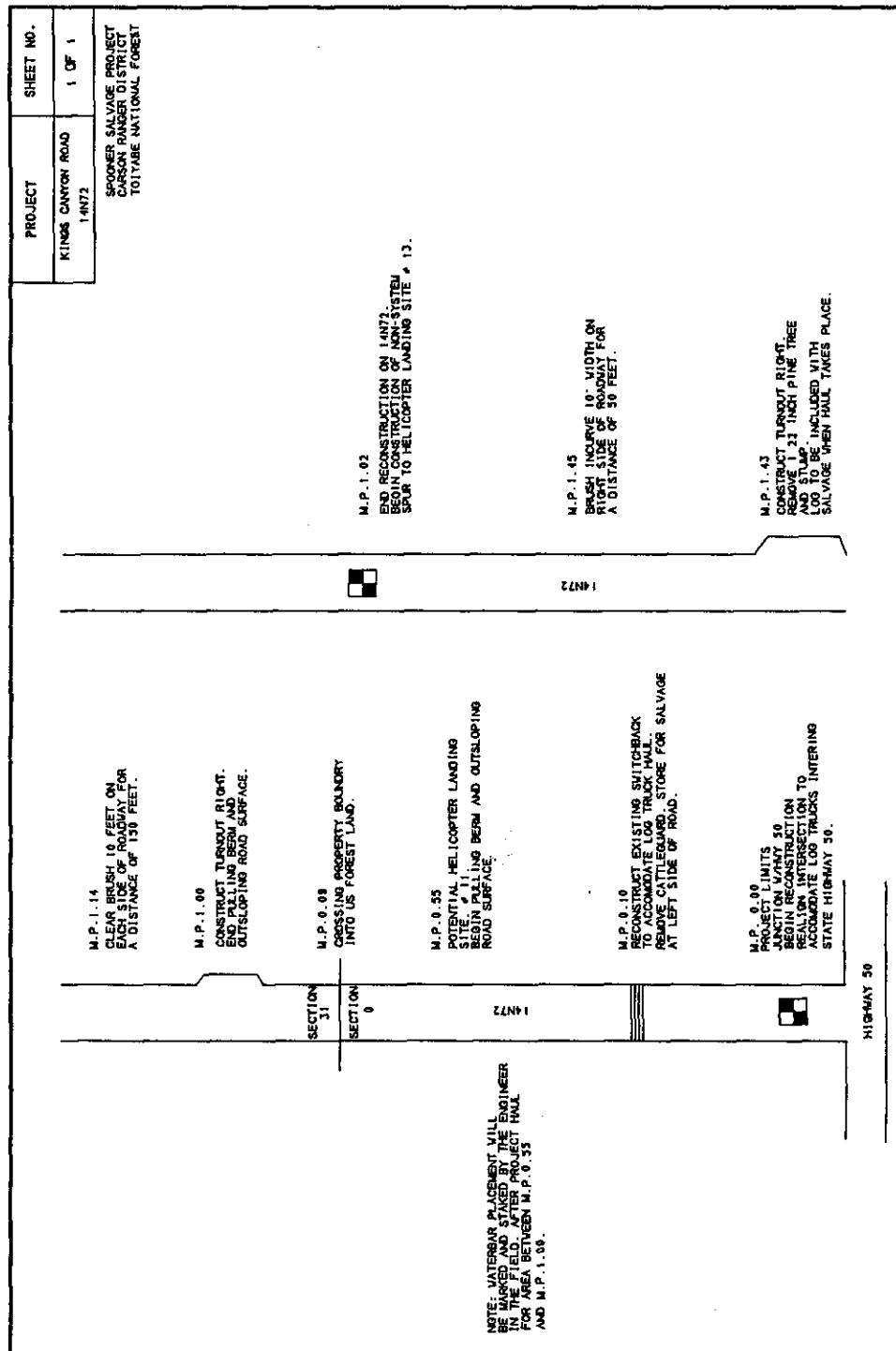


FIGURE 4: DETAIL DRAWING FOR SWITCHBACK RECONSTRUCTION AT M.P. 0.10 ON THE KINGS CANYON ROAD (SUBMITTED BY THE CARSON RANGER DISTRICT AUGUST 1993)

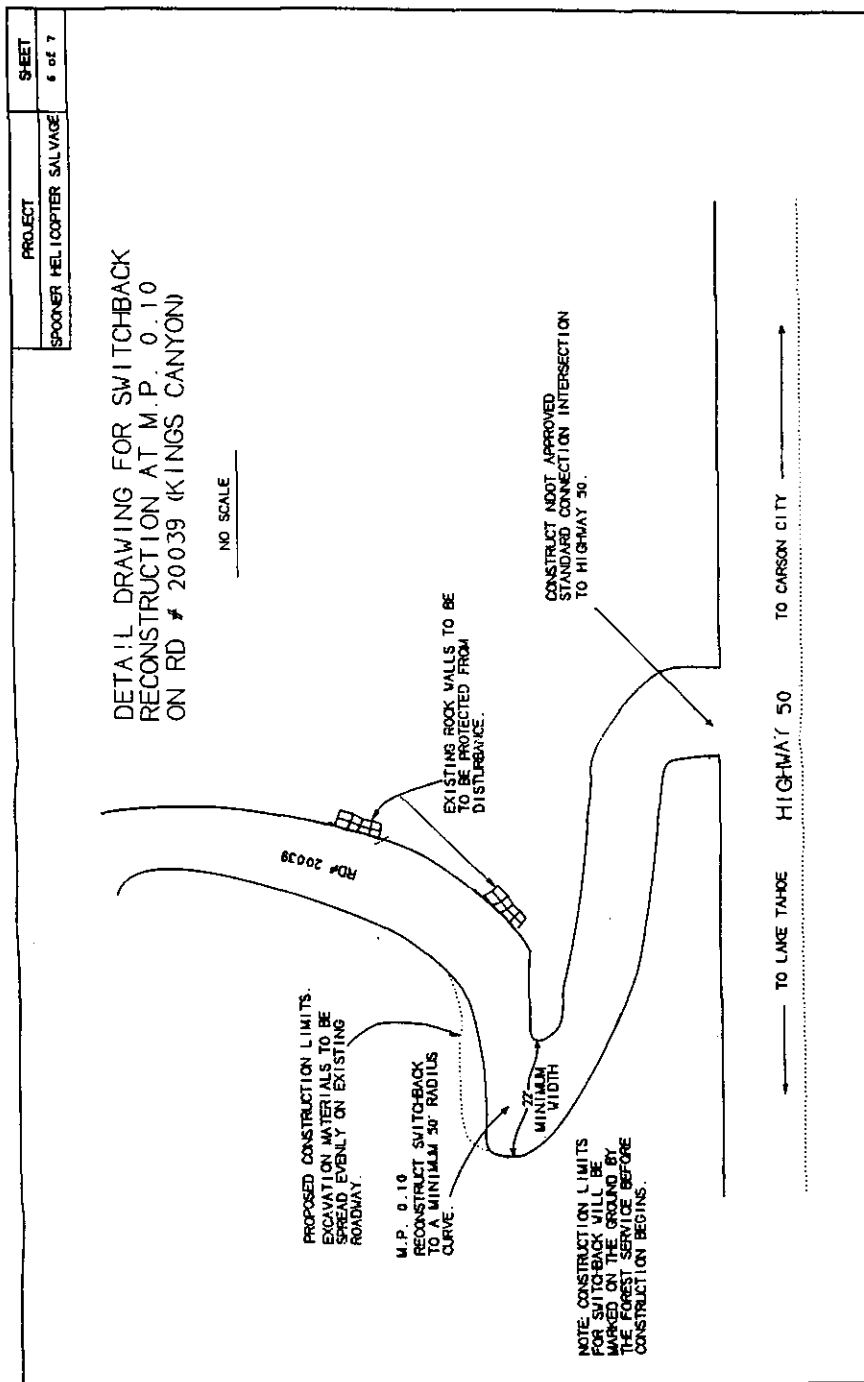


FIGURE 5: DRAWING OF THE PROPOSED ROAD TEMPLATE FOR RECONSTRUCTION ON  
 THE KINGS CANYON ROAD (SUBMITTED BY THE TOIYABE NATIONAL FOREST  
 MAY 1994)

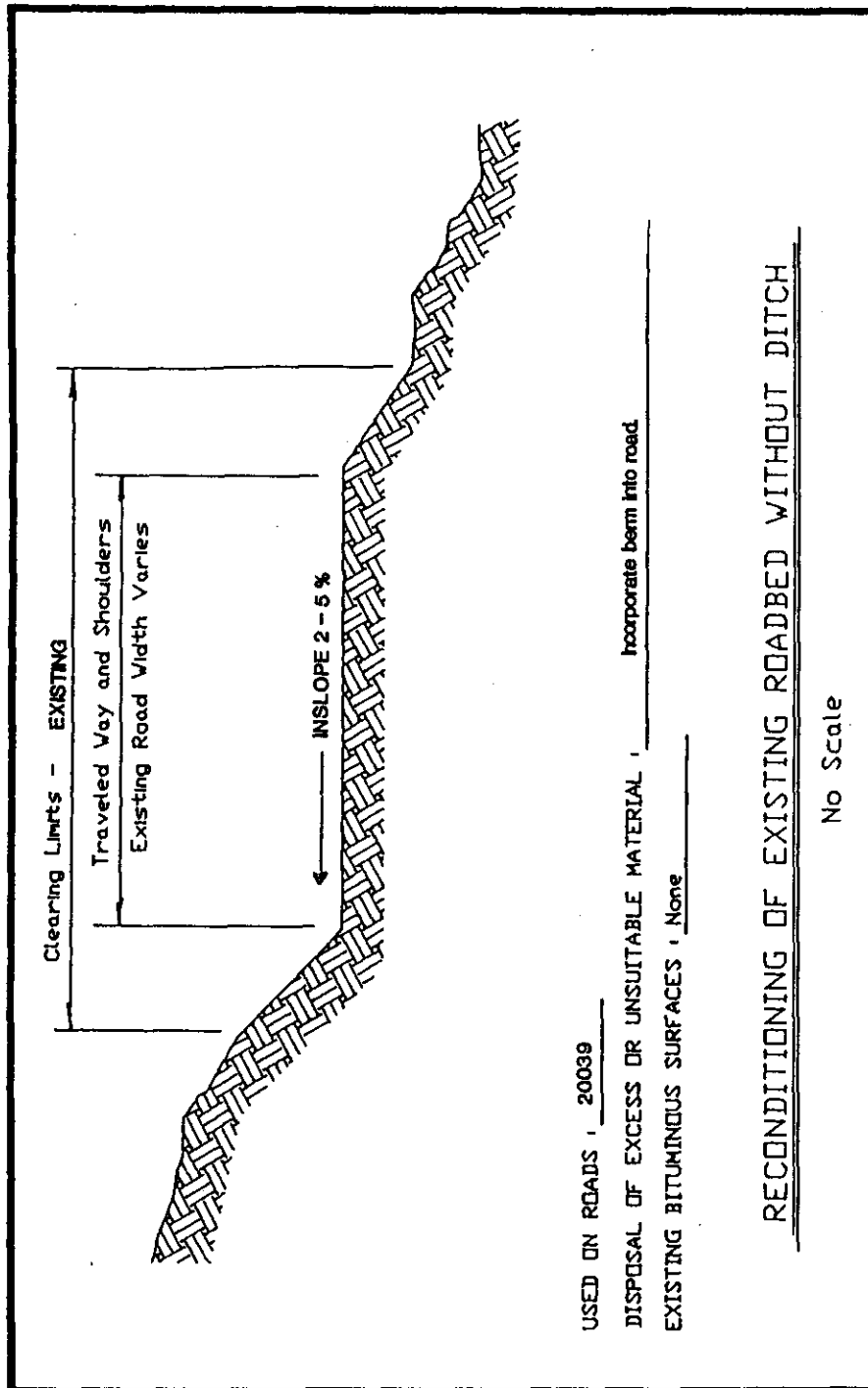


FIGURE 6: DETAIL DRAWING OF THE PROPOSED ROLLING DIPS TO BE ADDED TO THE KINGS CANYON ROAD (SUBMITTED BY THE TOIYABE NATIONAL FOREST MAY 1994)

